

Congressional Budget Office estimated would be needed for mothers to afford to work the longer hours and maintain their benefits.

Disgracefully, their proposals don't stop there. The Republican budget leads to \$24 billion less in child support payments. It also cuts \$14.3 billion from Federal student aid programs so the average student borrowing for college will now pay an additional \$5,800. It cuts health care for disabled and impoverished people, aid for abused and neglected foster children, financial assistance to the aged and disabled poor and food subsidies.

However, they don't cut everything. In true Republican, let-them-eat-cake fashion, the Republican budget does have one program to help those in need. The bill provides two \$40 coupons to people so that they can buy converter boxes for their television sets, so they can watch digital television.

Together, America can do better than trading crisp, clean digital television for food, health care and education. I urge my colleagues to vote against this disgrace and not pay for tax cuts for millionaires on the backs of the poor.

HONORING ERIE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS, RALPH J. GALANTI, JR.

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 18, 2005

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure and gratitude that I stand here today to recognize Ralph J. Galanti, Jr., Erie Community College Director of Athletics who is retiring after 36 years of service to ECC.

Born and raised in the City of Lackawanna, over the last three and one-half decades Ralph "Chico" Galanti has completely transformed ECC's athletic program, putting ECC on the map in the college sports world.

As coach of the ECC hockey team, Galanti led the team to appearances at eight NJCAA national championships, winning five regional titles.

In his role as Athletic Director, Galanti was instrumental in brining football to ECC and had a hands on role in the development of ECC's Burt Flickinger Athletic Center, a facility awarded for its design, which not only serves the college but the entire community, hosting national athletic events.

Galanti's ongoing efforts increased enrollment at the school where he pushed students to balance athletics and academics.

For his accomplishments, Chico has been inducted into the Greater Buffalo Hall of Fame and the National Junior College Athletic Association Hockey Coaches Hall of Fame.

The Ralph and Grace Galanti Memorial Scholarship fund honor's Ralph's parents, and continues his legacy of commitment, by assisting the student athletes in our community.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure I recognize Ralph Galanti, Jr., a man whose devotion to Erie Community College has shaped the lives of thousands of ECC students and left a positive mark on the entire Western New York community. On behalf of the residents of New York's 27th Congressional District I would like to wish Chico health and happiness in his retirement by using his signature farewell, "be happy."

HONORING THE LIFE OF LIEUTENANT COLONEL THOMAS A. WREN

HON. TOM DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 18, 2005

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Lieutenant Colonel Thomas A. Wren and to recognize his service to our Nation.

Lt. Col. Wren graduated from George Mason University and received a commission in the Army Reserve through the Reserve Officer Training Corps. He joined the 80th Division Army Reserve unit in 1984 and held positions in Virginia, Delaware, Maryland and Pennsylvania. He was called to active duty four times since 2000, serving in Bosnia, Afghanistan and Iraq. While not on active duty, Lt. Col. Wren worked as a project manager at Sytel working on projects at USAID, USDA, Army Research Laboratory as well as the State Department. His numerous decorations include two Bronze Stars.

His most recent assignment was assisting with the training of the Iraqi military. Tragically, Lt. Col. Wren was killed in an accident on November 5, 2005 in Tallil, Iraq, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Words cannot express the gratitude we feel to those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. This is a debt that can never be repaid. I know words are not much comfort for the family of Lt. Col. Wren, who are no doubt suffering in the wake of the loss of this intelligent and dedicated man. I hope they will take some solace in knowing that we will never forget Lt. Col. Wren's sacrifice or the sacrifices made by other patriots like him in defense of our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I call upon my colleagues to remember in our minds and in our hearts the bravery and sacrifice of Lt. Col. Thomas A. Wren, as well as that of all the men and women of the armed services who honorably protect the American people.

COERCED STERILIZATIONS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC AND SLOVAKIA

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 18, 2005

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, last week, the district court in the Czech town of Ostrava reached a very important decision. The court concluded that, in 2001 after the birth of her second child, a local Romani woman was sterilized without informed consent. In fact, since last year, the Czech Ombudsman has been examining dozens of similar cases. Although he has not yet issued any public findings, it is expected that the Ombudsman will confirm that many other Romani women experienced similar violations of their rights, as documented by several Czech human rights groups and the European Roma Rights Center.

Sadly, the issue of sterilizations without informed consent is not new in this region. As early as 1977, the dissident group Charter 77 reported on systematic efforts to target Romani women in Czechoslovakia for coerced

sterilization. While the vast majority of sterilizations in the Czech Republic and Slovakia since 1989 were performed with informed consent, the Ostrava case demonstrates that the practice of performing sterilizations without informed consent did not completely end with the fall of the communist regime.

That precedent-setting court decision sheds light on a number of legal points in one specific case. At the same time, there are many larger questions still at issue, including whether racism against Roma contributed to the abuse. Frankly, given the large percentage of Roma among the victims of sterilization without informed consent compared with the small percentage of the Czech population that Roma constitute, it is hard for me to believe that race did not play some role. There are, of course, other possible factors to consider: what role did a poor quality of medical care or training play in these cases of medical malpractice? Did a lack of respect for an individual's liberty—a hold-over mentality from the totalitarian period—also contribute to the abuse?

I welcome the Ostrava court's decision and commend the plaintiff in that case, Helena Ferencikova, for her courage in bringing it forward. I have also been heartened by the apparent seriousness of the Ombudsman's investigation into this difficult and sensitive matter.

Unfortunately, similar issues in neighboring Slovakia continue to be met with government denials and stonewalling.

In 2003, the Slovak Government concluded a year-long investigation into allegations that some Romani women were sterilized without informed consent, even after the fall of communism. That investigation was deeply flawed. At one point, for example, a spokesperson for the Minister for Human Rights threatened that anyone bringing forward allegations of sterilization without informed consent would go to jail, one way or another. This is not the way to foster confidence in an investigation or to encourage victims to speak out.

Significantly, the Czech investigation and the Slovak investigation both revolved around the same 1992 Czechoslovak law on sterilizations, put in place before the two countries split apart. Czech authorities have understood that law as requiring that sterilizations had to be requested by the person who was going to be sterilized, that there had to be evidence of consent by that person, and that consent had to be meaningfully informed. Being "informed" means, for example, that the expectant mother must be told why the procedure is necessary. If someone was given false information about the procedure, which was the case in many instances, then she was not meaningfully "informed."

When interpreting the same law, however, Slovak authorities maintained that consent did not have to be "informed." Accordingly, Slovak investigators examined numerous cases where there was no informed consent but still concluded there was no violation of the 1992 law because, according to their twisted logic, consent didn't have to be informed!

In reality, the Slovak Government seemed to organize its investigation into the sterilization cases in a way that was designed to cover up the magnitude of the problem. The Slovak Government's investigation revealed seven cases of Romani minors who were sterilized in violation of the then-existing Slovak law. In reality, the Slovak Government's